1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

765 Soon after the death (immediately after the burial, so nearly as could be ascertained) there is an apparently ceremonial mourning, in which the matrons of the clan, and, at least to some extent, the warriors also, participate. The mourners wail loudly, throw earth and ashes or ordure on their heads, and beat and bruise (but apparently avoid scarifying) their breasts, faces, and arms. This is continued, culminating daily about the hour of interment, for several days—unless the rancheria is sooner abandoned, in which case the period of formal mourning is shortened.

In addition to the formal mourning of matrons there is a custom of nocturnal wailing after the death of warriors in battle, and, apparently, also, following the death of matrons or nubile maidens, which attracts the notice of frontier rancheros and vaqueros. According to their accounts the first note of lamentation may be sounded at any hour of the night by any of the group to which the deceased belonged; it is successively taken up by other members of the party until all voices are united in a resounding chorus of inarticulate moans, wails, shriller cries, and wild howls, likened by the auditors to the blood-bellowing of cattle; if other groups of the tribesmen are within hearing, they, too, take up the cry, so that the lamentation may extend to the entire tribe and echo throughout practically all Seriland at the same moment. The fierce howling and attendant excitement may rise so high in the group in which the wailing begins that all seem bereft of customary caution; and sometimes they suddenly seize ollas and weapons, and decamp incontinently, perhaps scattering widely and racing for miles before settling again for sleep or watchful guard.

775 The ideas of the folk concerning death and concerning the relations between the living and the dead are largely esoteric, and are, moreover, veiled by the nonequivalence of Seri expressions with the terms of alien languages.

At least an inchoate belief in a life beyond the grave was intimated by Mashém and his companions at Costa Rica, and their circumspection of speech and mien indicated a strong veneration for, or dread of, the manes; though the specific expressions were connected with deceased matrons, who alone seemed to be prominent in the minds of the clanmates. So far as could be gathered the belief seems to be that the dead find their way back to the primordial underworld, whence Earth and Beings were brought up by Pelican and Turtle (or Shark) respectively, and are liable to return by night with mischievous intent.

The direct expressions of the Seri informants are fully corroborated by the association of things in interior Seriland. The burial of water and food, of the personal fetishes and votive objects, and of the highly prized face-paint belonging to the dead matron, attests anticipation of a post-mortuary journey; while the temporary abandonment of jacales and rancherias and the nocturnal fears and flights alike betoken

1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

dread of sepulchral visitants. The most suggestive of the associations, i. e., between the scatophagic stores and the sepulchers, awaits full explanation.

Serial Place of Seri Socialry

In the conventional seriation of social development four stages are clearly recognizable, viz: (1) Savagery, in which the social organization is based on blood kinship reckoned in the female line; (2) barbarism, in which the basis of organization is actual or assumed consanguinity reckoned in the male line; (3) civilization, in which the laws are based on property-right, primarily territorial; and (4) enlightenment, in which the organization is constitutional and rests on the recognition of equal human rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Now, in terms of this seriation of general culture-stages, the place of the Seri tribe is clear. Reckoning consanguinity wholly in the maternal line, as they do, they belong in the initial stage of savagery. Accordingly they pertain to the lower or more primitive of the two great stages represented by the American aborigines.

A still more refined seriation may be effected through conspection of the several lines of activital development—the esthetic and industrial, and especially the sophic or fiducial, as well as the strictly social; for these lines are most intimately intertwined. Thus, in the Old World, the transition from maternal to patriarchal organization was accompanied, and evidently superinduced, by the development of zooculture into extensive herding; in different districts of the New World, a parallel transition attended the development of agriculture to a phase involving the protection of acequias and fields by armed men; while throughout primitive life, laws are formulated and enforced chiefly through appeals to the superphysical or mythologic. Now, review of the Seri esthetic indicates that the decorative concepts and activities are in large measure inchoate and are practically confined to a single manifestation, i. e., the delineation of totemic symbols primarily denoting zoic tutelaries and incidentally connoting the blood carriers of clans consecrated to these beast gods; so that the esthetic motives and devices of the tribe are essentially zoosematic. In like manner a considerable part of the technic of the tribe is zoomimic, as already shown, while even the most highly developed industrial activities occupy the biotic borderland of mechanical chance rather than the characteristic demotic realm of intellectual design. So, too, the faith of the folk is exclusively and overweeningly zootheistic, to the extent that every motion, every thought, every organized action, every law, every ceremony, is shaped with reference to mystical potencies vaguely conceived as a pantheon of maleficent beast gods; and it is this dark and hopeless faith that gives character to the tribal esthetic and technic. Concordantly the faith finds reflection in the very elements of the social organization; the matron is the blood-carrier and the lawgiver not in and for herself

2: Kroeber E-5 (1930) 1931 NU31 Seri NU31

on a string around his neck, which he got from his father. It is a two inch length of cane, with a wooden stopper, containing a white powder of stone (?). A little of this powder put into fresh water, brings dew; into salt water, rain. 778 789

Similarly, Chico Romero wears on his neck a tiny spool-shaped object of wood, scarcely 2 cm. long, with notched ends. When he dies, this will burst; or rather, it seems that a larger object of the same shape, which another man keeps, will burst with thunder.

To get luck, a man paints a "cross" on his forehead, breast, and "bed" and goes to sleep. Then a dream comes in which he gets what he is thinking of. Sometimes the dream comes true; sometimes not. Some dreams are lies. 787

The soul (*alma*), he'ë'sax, is all over the body and is noiseless. It is "nearly the same as blood": when the blood is lost, the soul goes. Some say that when the Seri die they are reborn in the north as Cocopa. 774 775

There seem to be no special beliefs or practises about twins. 845

Antiso'ma (— Montezuma?) is the size of a child, has a beard, a golden staff, white clothes inside and black outside. He lives in a cave. Once he tried to take a young man away with him in order to dress him nicely. Later the young man's relatives went with him to find Antiso'ma again, but could not. 776

Songs

Toad was a woman who had only a breech-clout and wanted a cotton shirt. She said she would give herself to a man for one. 533

Coyote was a Seri once.

Pinacate (dung-beetle?) wanted a bride and was jealous about her.

Colaprieta, the black-bellied ant, also was a man and wanted to marry the hokó'ctim ant. He was making a house of grass for her. She was afraid of him, and her relatives took her away.

Games

The four-tube-hiding game is played with canes open at one end. These canes are: blackened all over, old man; unpainted, old woman; blackened at one end, boy; blackened in the middle, girl. The boy and girl are made by slitting off slivers on two sides. The names serve as designations only; the differences between the tubes do not enter into the game. The player with the tubes turns around, puts a piece of twig into one, fills them all with sand, and throws them before his opponent, who tries to empty the twig from the *third* tube he selects. If so, he wins the canes, that is, the right to play. If the twig is in the first tube emptied, he loses 10; if in the second, 6; if in the fourth, 4. Counters are little natural shell disks. 524